



Washington State
Board of Education



Working to Raise Student Achievement Dramatically

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State Board of Education releases review of revised version of math standards in Washington State

OLYMPIA (Wa) – The State Board of Education (SBE) today released its consultant's latest review of the state's revised mathematics standards, which characterized the K-8 standards as "very close to excellent," but said while the high school standards are much improved, they still need more work.

"The revised standards do provide greater clarity about what is expected of students in each grade, more explicit guidance to educators about what to teach when, and increase the rigor of math to ensure more Washington students succeed in mathematics," said SBE board member Steve Floyd of Gig Harbor, chair of the Math Committee.

"Both the State Board of Education and the State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) were given an accelerated timeline of one year by the State Legislature to revise the math standards in a move to improve math achievement," Floyd said. "That's a big task, but everyone involved in this process – the SBE, the SBE math panel, educators, parents, students, community leaders, OSPI and OSPI's consultant, the Dana Center – have been working really hard together to go the distance to create world-class math standards for our students.

"This latest review by SBE's consultant, Strategic Teaching, provides concrete steps to further refine and improve the standards, particularly at the high school level, and is a positive step in this ongoing process," said Floyd.

Strategic Teaching, a nationally respected educational consultant that worked with SBE in 2007, conducted a review of OSPI's February 29, 2008 version of the math standards.

"We believe at the K-8 level, the standards need only some language adjustments and overall successfully address SBE's recommendations for revising our state's standards to meet world class excellence," said Edie Harding, executive director of SBE. "The board believes that the latest version of the standards is a huge improvement over the existing ones, but it supports Strategic Teaching's findings that work on language and content remains for grades 9-12."

Strategic Teaching provided recommendations to further improve the content, rigor and clarity of the standards, as well as differentiating between what topics students are expected to learn and how they should be taught.

“The board believes it is worth taking the extra time and effort to make these standards truly world class and we are committed to working with OSPI to see that this happens,” Harding said.

Specifically, the review of the February 29, 2008 draft math standards resulted in three main recommendations:

1. An exemplar review on the OSPI February standards, a) K–8 and b) 9–12 similar to last year’s comparison to other states, countries and national frameworks using the nine criteria to provide external validation that these are the best standards. In order to compress the timeline and keep the standards-writing process as close to schedule as possible, we suggest fewer grade levels and fewer documents.
2. A substantive edit for grades K–8. The content is very good; language is almost ready. These standards are so close that work could be completely very quickly.
3. A revision of the high school standards. The core content of the subjects is in the document and many of the examples are excellent. The language needs to be tightened and there is some more work to be done on the content. This means it will take slightly longer than the grade K–8 work.

SBE will continue to work with the state legislature, SBE’s consultant and OSPI to develop a timeline to complete the revision of the standards during spring and summer of 2008. Once new math standards are in place, SBE and OSPI will work to make improvements to math curriculum, testing, teacher preparation and training, and accountability measures.

“Washington is moving in the right direction, and the revised math standards are the first step in accelerating that progress. New standards will help ensure our students have the best math foundation to prepare them for post-secondary education, the workplace, and life,” said Board Chair Mary Jean Ryan of Seattle.

For more information about the State Board of Education and to view the *A Report to the Washington State Board of Education: Second Review of Washington K–12 Mathematics Standards*, please visit www.sbe.wa.gov.

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